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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2017
TAGS: PREL KPKO UNSC MASS EG SU

SUBJECT: SUDANESE OFFICIAL, JEM REPRESENTATIVE ON IBRAHIM YEHIA CAIRO PEACE DEAL

Classified by acting Political Counselor Roger Kenna for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On July 19, poloff discussed with Sudanese Embassy Political Counselor Mohamed Al Rashid the peace agreement between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and Ibrahim Yehia Abdul Rahman, representing a faction of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Local press had reported that this agreement been concluded in Cairo on July 15. Al Rashid admitted that Yehia represents only a small faction of the JEM, but said the GOS is in desperate times, similar to a drowning man who must "grasp at even the smallest stick." As long as the major Darfur rebel groups refuse to negotiate with the GOS, he continued, the GOS must negotiate smaller deals with any willing party. Al Rashid said that according to this agreement, Yehia and members of his Masalit tribe can return to Darfur safely and become integrated into life and institutions there. He said that the GOS did not offer Yehia any personal incentives, such as money or a designated position in the government.

¶2. (C) Poloff discussed the agreement separately on July 19 with Cairo-based JEM Presidency Chief of Staff Gammali Hassan Galaleddin. Galaleddin opined that Yehia must have negotiated this deal for "personal reasons," because, since "Arabs already occupy the land," Yehia's Masalit tribe has nowhere to which to return. Galaleddin at first called the agreement a "blow" to the JEM, but then added that most of the Masalit tribe "did not go with Yehia," because the agreement "does not address root concerns" such as power and wealth sharing and returning displaced persons to their original land. The JEM will fill Yehia's position as Chief of the Legislative Body "soon" with someone else from the Masalit tribe, Galaleddin said, implying that this would help the JEM retain Masalit support.

¶3. (U) The Egyptian government daily Al Ahram reported on July 16 that the GOS and the JEM, led by Ibrahim Yehia Abdul Rahman, signed a peace agreement in Cairo on July 15. Al Ahram reported on July 17 that JEM representatives in Darfur denied that Yehia represented the JEM as a movement. Egyptian independent daily Nahdet Misr reported on July 18 that the parties had agreed only to cooperate on returning refugees from the Masalit tribe to Darfur, and did not address issues such as division of power and resources.
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